

Congressman Jesse Jackson, Jr., speaking about the passing of Gordon Parks today said, "Gordon Parks was a renaissance man. He was born poor and was mostly self-educated, nevertheless he was able to soar to the top of American arts and letters, mainly through his photo journalism. He was the first African American photojournalist and worked for Life Magazine for 24 years, but also through his music, movies, poetry and other writings.

"Gordon Parks was a man with a mission and early in life he discovered that photography could help to expose wrongs and help to make them right. As a result, his photography exposed poverty on a worldwide basis, and he contributed to the success of the American civil rights movement as well.

"In addition to his photography, Parks was a trailblazer among modern African American filmmakers, making movies like 'The Learning Tree' and 'Shaft,' which paved the way for current filmmakers like John Singleton and Spike Lee.

"Our condolences, prayers and gratitude are extended to Mr. Parks' family and friends," Jackson concluded.